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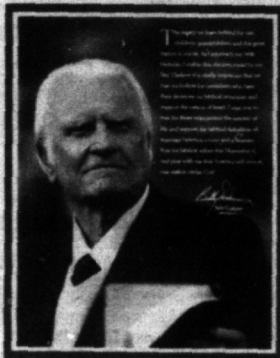
May 23, 2013
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THE Baptist Record

Vol. 137
No. 21

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

IRS targets BGEA, other Christian organizations



By Todd Stames
Correspondent

NEW YORK (BP and local reports) — Ministries surrounding famed evangelist Billy Graham and his son Franklin, a 180-year-old Baptist newspaper in North Carolina, and the founder of Focus on the Family all say they were unfairly targeted by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for scrutiny of their tax-exempt status, Fox News has learned.

The revelations involving the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), Samaritan's

Purse, and the Biblical Recorder newspaper of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention seem to indicate the IRS was targeting more than just Tea Party groups and conservative political organizations.

It was previously known that the IRS was targeting non-profit groups that had "Tea Party" or "patriot" in their names, while green-lighting other groups that could be considered liberal or progressive.

Franklin Graham, president of the ministry his father founded as well as the international charity known as Samaritan's Purse,

wrote in a letter to President Obama on May 14, "I am bringing this to your attention because I believe that someone in the Administration was targeting and attempting to intimidate us."

Franklin Graham described the IRS audits as "morally wrong and unethical — indeed some would call it 'un-American.'"

BGEA and Samaritan's Purse, both based in North Carolina, were notified of the IRS audits on the same day — not long after BGEA ran advertisements supporting North Carolina's marriage amendment.

The ads encouraged voters to

"cast our ballots for candidates who base their decisions on biblical principles and support the nation of Israel." The ads concluded with these words: "Vote for biblical values this November 6, and pray with me (Billy Graham) that America will remain one nation under God."

"I do not believe that the IRS audit of our two organizations last year is a coincidence — or justifiable," Graham wrote in his letter.

The Internal Revenue Service did not return calls seeking comment.

see IRS on p. 6

Young Musicians share talents

Honor Choir making plans for '14 encore

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Wyndy South, consultant for the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson, thought a Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir sounded like a good idea, so she and a group of gifted Mississippi Baptist musicians designed one.

The pilot session, held recently at First Church, Florence, made the grade and the 2014 session is in the works, said South.

"We felt there was a need to have a Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir, where there hadn't been such an event before for this age group, because we want our young musicians to have a spiritual place to share their talents and help them understand the value of the musical gifts God has created in each of them," she said.

The Young Musicians Honor Choir is open to children in grades four through six. The session, which was attended by 44 young people, included classes and rehearsals on Saturday involving worship arts; a missions project; a Saturday evening concert; and a Sunday morning performance integrated with the worship service of



SWEET MUSIC — Members of the 2013 Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir perform at First Church, Florence. The 2013 session was the pilot for the concept, and coordinators report that the 2014 session is already in the planning stages. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

the church where the session is being held.

"The Young Musicians Honor Choir program is an opportunity for our young musicians, who hold so much importance for the future of church music, to spread their wings when they might have been overlooked in the past until they got older," South said. "I believe we witnessed the potential that is there, and we're excited about

expanding the Honor Choir into a 2014 session."

South thanked the adult musicians who volunteered to plan, coordinate, and teach the session, as well as the host, First Church, Florence. "There was such a tremendous amount of experience available to the young people. We were blessed by the volunteers' Godly spirits and servant hearts."

Slater Murphy is MBCB di-

rector of church music. "After meeting together last year with Wyndy South for a time of prayer and visioning, we both sensed the time was right for the development of a statewide honor choir concept for older children," he said. "After much labor and planning, the first Mississippi Baptist Young

see MUSICIANS on p. 7

2014 Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir

For more information on auditioning for the 2014 Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir, contact Wyndy South at MBCB Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3272 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 272. E-mail: wsouth@mbcb.org Web site: www.mbc.org/hon- or_choir

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Maybe next year

A friend told me of the elderly pastor's heroic exploits during World War II. Although I had known the pastor for some time, he had never mentioned his military service. I didn't even know he had fought in the war.

Memorial Day was approaching, and it crossed my mind that my pastor friend could author a masterful Guest Opinion for page two of The Baptist Record that would detail his combat experiences. He was educated, worldly, popular, and had a great writing background. Based on what our mutual friend had shared with me, I believed him to be a perfect fit for a Guest Opinion on the subject of Memorial Day.

I called him. He was upbeat despite the chronic health problems brought on by aging, and he really didn't want to talk about himself. He was very much interested in knowing how things were getting along at the Baptist Building. He asked about some of his close friends who worked there. As engaging as always, he wanted to know about my wife and young family and assured me he would be praying for us. I had no doubt he was genuinely interested.

When we finally got around to talking about the Guest Opinion, the conversation took a markedly different turn. There was a long pause, and when he did speak again the tone of his voice was much more subdued and pensive. "Well, I haven't given over much time to thinking about the war in quite a long time," he said. "The worst parts, that's something you wish you could forget."

Having never served a day in the military and blissfully unaware of the impact those "worst parts" of war could have on a man, I pressed ahead. "But your story is so unique and needs to be told," I pointed out to him. After another long pause and a sigh that was palpable even over a long distance telephone line, he said, "Let me pray about it and call you back."

Weeks passed, and he called. He apologized for taking so long to return the call. He also apolo-

gized for his decision not to write the Guest Opinion. In a halting, broken voice, he tried to explain but finally said, "Maybe next year. Thanks, friend."

I called the following year, a few weeks before Memorial Day. He sounded frail, but was as upbeat as ever. "I knew you were going to call again this year. I still don't think I'm going to be able to do it. Maybe next year."

I called the following year, and his widow told me of his passing. I asked her if she knew whether he had gotten around to writing anything for The Baptist Record. She said she would check his papers and let me know. She called me back to say she could find nothing to that effect.

I mourned him because I knew him as a great and unashamed preacher of the Gospel, someone who had a tremendous impact on my life. Now he was gone, and his wartime experiences with him. No one would ever know what he could have written.

I think of him often, and I try to envision what terrible things this powerful, self-confident, vibrant man saw and did in war that he couldn't talk about, that he couldn't write about, that he could only speak of in whispered tones and roundabout words. In the years since his passing, I have endeavored to understand what men and women like him go through to preserve our way of life in this country. For many of them, it's an awful price to pay.

Remember those who have not returned from war. They died on our behalf. Thank a veteran today — thank every veteran you see on Memorial Day and every other day — for his service. Because of them, we can worship our Heavenly Father and His only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, freely and openly in America. That's not true in most of the rest of the world.

Thank you, my pastor friend, for doing what you did for me and my children. I'll reach out to a veteran like you today, because now I know, painfully, there may not be a "Maybe next year."

Most important advice of all

It's graduation season, when bright young students must endure one final mind-numbing lecture before collecting their degrees — the commencement address.

This speech seldom contains advice you can actually use. The speaker often receives a generous check for his or her remarks, but dares not utter anything that might offend someone for fear of being protested, disinvited, or blacklisted from future graduation ceremonies.

Not being a celebrity, a politician, or a rich donor, I have little chance of ever being invited to deliver a commencement address, much less disinvited, but I'll share a few practical tips for you grads anyway, at no charge:

■ If you need to move back home for a while (or delay moving out) it's OK. Millions of others share your plight but make your bed, help with the dishes, and offer to pay rent whether it's asked for or not.

■ Don't check your text messages during job interviews. Trust me on this one.

■ If you're graduating with significant student loan debt (2011 grads walked the aisle owing an average of nearly \$27,000), pay it off before you incur more debt. Don't start your adult life in bondage to creditors. It will set a pattern you might never escape. Stay available to God. As long you are servicing debt, you won't be fully available to serve Him.

■ The job market still stinks. You've probably heard about that. The unemployment rate for older teens and post-college 20-somethings hovers around 16% and tops 25% if you include young adults who have given up looking for work or are underemployed part-timers.

Don't lose hope while waiting for your dream job. Any honest work is honorable work in God's economy. He will open the right doors in His time if you follow Him. In the meantime, learn everything He wants to teach you where you are.

■ The research on Millennials, the generation born between 1980-2000, says you want to experience the wider world up close — to see it, touch it, interact with it. OK, now is your opportunity to do that, unfettered by the family and school commitments of the past or the major adult responsibilities you will face in the future.

Go out there and find a place to serve God and others for a year or two, or more, regardless of whether it specifically contributes to your career path.

"One of the characteristics of Millennial



Guest opinion

with Erich Bridges

life has become the image of the traveler," observes David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, which has exhaustively studied Millennials and their relationship to spiritual life.

"They want to wander the world, both in real life and in digital ways. They want to feel untethered. There is a trend among young adults of delaying the pressures of adult life as long as possible; they want to embrace a lifestyle of risk, exploration and unscripted moments..."

"This transience stands in contrast to the staid, predictable, and often overprotective experience that most churches seem to offer. The gap is simple: Millennials are a generation that craves spontaneity, participation, adventure, and clan-like relationships, but what they often find in churches are featureless programs and moralistic content.

"Leaders who hope to alter the spiritual journeys of today's Millennials need to embrace something of a 'reverse mentoring' mindset, allowing the next generation to help lead alongside established leaders... Millennials are more willing to be challenged than most church leaders are willing to challenge them."

If you recognize something of yourself in that generational profile, embrace it even if Mom, Dad, and your own internal clock are desperately urging you to get a job and settle down — but don't wander for the sake of wandering.

Wander with a purpose: God's purpose. He might lead you to the ends of the earth to proclaim His love to people who have never heard the name of Jesus. He might lead you to serve within walking distance of the street or the church where you grew up. He might lead you to do both.

Follow Him. Those two words are the best graduation advice you will ever hear.

Bridges is global correspondent for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. His commentary appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.

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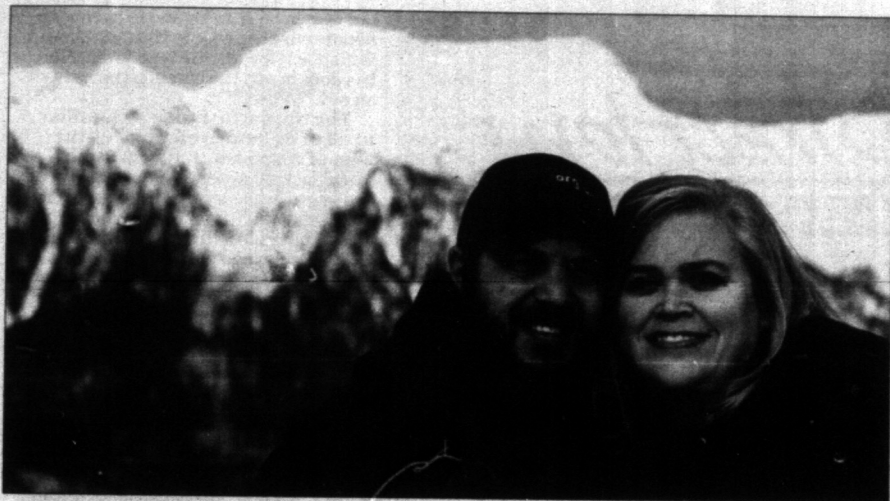
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VOLUME 137 • NUMBER 21 • ISSN-0005-5778

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$10.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. All submissions are subject to editing.



MARC AND KELLYE HOOKS

Baptists prepare to take Gospel to '14 Winter Olympics in Sochi

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP) — With the 2014 Winter Olympic Games less than a year away, Southern Baptists are preparing for opportunities in Sochi, Russia, to turn hearts and minds toward a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Oklahoma natives Marc and Kellye Hooks are leading the Engage Sochi effort.

"Our vision is to make a difference for Christ before, during and after the 2014 Winter Olympic Games," Marc Hooks said.

"Our mission is ministry and follow-up that supports and leads to church planting in the Sochi area and beyond."

Marc Hooks said a key innovative aspect of Engage Sochi entails mobilizing Southern Baptists to reach the people of Sochi through mass evangelism and church planting, not only during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games but also before and after when the masses of tourists and other visitors have left the city.

"We realized that traditional models only utilized one phase of the life cycle of the Olympic host city," he said. "Olympic ministry has focused primarily on the time during the Olympics and Paralympic Games."

"However, Olympic cities begin building their infrastructure years prior to the Games. If we use the momentum provided by the Olympics to begin building a church planting infrastructure prior to the actual events, then in 2014 there will be new church plants ready to receive and disciple those reached by mass evangelism efforts during the Games."

"That paves the way for follow-up and discipleship after the Olympics as well."

As part of the Engage Sochi initiative, International Mission Board (IMB) church planters arrived in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi in 2011 and have hosted

numerous volunteer teams — all focused on reaching the Sochi community with the Gospel.

Engage Sochi missionaries have partnered with local Russian Baptists and launched at least one house church group in the city and are working to establish a second home Bible study near the Olympic mountain venues in Krasnaya Polyana. They pray that several more small groups will be started prior to the start of the Games next year.

During the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Engage Sochi team will coordinate approximately 400 Southern Baptist volunteers who will come to Sochi.

"Our goal is to share the Gospel primarily with the people who live and work in Sochi and then connect those people with our missionaries and others involved in local church plants," said Hooks, a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University as is his wife Kellye. "but it is kind of like archery. That is our bulls-eye. There will, of course, be arrows that hit other areas of the target, and that is not a bad thing."

"However, you have to have something specific to aim at, and so we are trying to reach the people of Sochi."

Engage Sochi volunteers will meet and share the Gospel with people from all over the world, aiming to connect them with IMB church planters in their areas. Marc Hooks said, noting that the opportunity to follow up with people is important.

Volunteers will use traditional Olympic ministry methods such as trading evangelism pins to engage people throughout the city and in Olympic venues.

However, their primary task will not be to see how many pins they can distribute in a day, but to spend time talking with people

and forming relationships. In addition, native Russian-speaking volunteers from across Eastern Europe and the United States will spend time in Sochi neighborhoods to connect with people and share the Gospel outside of traditional Olympic areas and venues.

The Engage Sochi initiative also has a stateside component. As churches send volunteers to Sochi, they are asked to engage their community as well. Each Engage Sochi partner church will receive a set of sermon outlines, adult and children's small group lessons, and ideas on how they can create Olympic-themed outreach events in their own churches.

"The Olympics are a wonderful way to reach people, not just in the Olympic city, but across the world," Marc Hooks said. "The Olympics bring us together, so at the same time that churches are reaching out across the world, we want them to use the Olympics as a way to reach people in their own communities."

Realizing that not every church can send a team, Sochi Engage leaders hope churches will join them as prayer partners.

"Prayer support is very important to us," Hooks said. "We realize that those churches who pray for us are on the front line of Olympic ministry. None of this would be possible without prayer, so regardless of whether a church sends volunteers to Sochi or not, we want them to both pray for the efforts in Russia and for them to be part of 'Engage Your Community.'"

Over the next year, the Engage Sochi team will release a virtual prayerwalk for each of the three major Olympic areas in Sochi. They will also publish a prayer guide to help those in the United States to know how to pray for the teams in Sochi.

SPORTS NEWS

Tebow tops poll of America's most influential athletes

BENTON HARBOR, Mich. (BP and local reports) — Just a few weeks after the New York Jets released him, quarterback Tim Tebow told a crowd of about 3,000 at a Michigan college that his main goal is to impact lives, whether on or off the field.

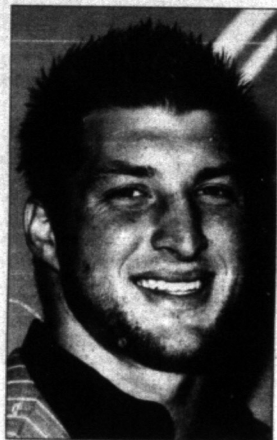
That shouldn't be too hard, considering a Forbes.com survey released in early May named Tebow as America's most influential athlete. Despite the controversy surrounding the public displays of his Christian faith, he finished ahead of Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, Jamaican track star Usain Bolt, and Yankees baseball shortstop Derek Jeter.

"That's a huge honor," Tebow said in response to the survey. "I see it as a great responsibility to be a role model for future generations. That's something I care about more than winning football games."

"If I can take the game of football and can transcend football — go to hospitals and make kids smile — I'll be doing things that matter."

Tebow took no questions from the news media, which was part of the Economic Club of Southwest Michigan's annual speaker series. During his presentation at Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor, he sat on stage and engaged in an easygoing conversation with a moderator, speaking intensely of his competitive nature, his Christian faith, his love of family, and his record-setting high school and college careers.

Although Tebow didn't mention his dismissal from the Jets during his hour-long speech or offer any insight as



TEBOW

to what his next move might be, the 25-year-old did talk about finding a life of fulfillment after the game.

"What I want to do with my life is impact lives," he said. "When a kid in a hospital is fighting for his life and I'm trying to win a football game, what really matters? This game isn't as important as a lot of us make it out to be. If I can give him a little bit of hope, I can do something that matters. That's what I want my legacy to be about. That's how I want to be remembered."

The closest Tebow came to shedding light on his future as a quarterback was when he repeated one of his favorite sayings: "I don't know what the future holds but at the end of the day I know who holds my future."

Editor's Note: Reprinted from WORLD News Service, a division of WORLD Magazine (www.worldmag.com).

"What I want to do with my life is impact lives. When a kid in a hospital is fighting for his life and I'm trying to win a football game, what really matters? This game isn't as important as a lot of us make it out to be. If I can give him a little bit of hope, I can do something that matters. That's what I want my legacy to be about. That's how I want to be remembered."

Tim Tebow
quarterback

It was a beautiful spring morning and, in fact, I clearly remember it because it was the first day of spring which, of course, means that warm weather would soon be upon us. Oh, I know there will be some chilly nights and cool days but warmth will arrive and I am looking forward to that. This particular morning my pre-dawn walk took me into the woods near our house. In the quiet of the early day, only one creature was heard. It was an owl out in the trees. On that morning he or she was in full voice and would say repetitively in a distinct owl cadence, "Who, who...who, who?" A minute or two would pass and right on schedule the owl said again, "Who, who...who, who?" I just kept walking, but I never got out of range of hearing the owl's call continue to echo through the quiet woods the one word question, "Who?"

While I occasionally hear owls, rarely do they just continue on and on with their calls. I do not know who the owl was talking to nor do I understand owl linguistics enough to know what that actually means. However, that morning it was a kind of God provided and meditative moment. I could not help but think who. From a biblical standpoint, who is found everywhere in Scripture, and it certainly has meaning.

I thought about the first who actually recorded in the Bible in Genesis 3:11 when God says, "Who told you that you were naked?" Adam and Eve had disobeyed God and a blanket of fear had come upon them. They ran and hid from the One they had communed with and enjoyed. God asked, "Where art thou Adam?" It was a simple question as God sought for them. It was a question that was asked not because God did not know where they were, but it was probably asked so that Adam and Eve would know



Who Who...Who Who?

where they were. Their answer was that they were naked and so they went and hid. Of course, what had taken place was that sin, as it always does, had stripped them of their innocence and of their sweet relationship with God. It had ruined paradise, darkened their hearts and caused them to run into their own loneliness. They, like most of us, quickly turned to blame somebody or something other than themselves. Most of us can quickly find a dozen things to blame for the condition we are in rather than face the reality that we are the ones who made the decisions that ultimately brought us to our situation.

The second who that I thought about involved the ministry of John the Baptist as he was introducing the person who was going to change lives and change us so much that flowing from us would be the very radiance of the Lord Himself and praise worthy of our God. John was preaching about repentance and turning from, turning to and allowing God to do

something in your life so that people can see that there is a difference in your life. As the people came to him wanting to be baptized, John told them to show that they had truly repented and God had come to work in them. He said something rather incredible, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3:8).

Then in Luke 19:40, Jesus points out that if the people of that day held their peace, did not express their praise to God, and the evidence of God at work in them was closed up and not expressed that the stones would immediately cry out. At times, I hear folks criticizing others for praising God more than they themselves praise God. Maybe that is what John had thought or that Jesus saw. Now I am not talking about being a gifted singer or an eloquent speaker so much as I am saying what the Scripture is presenting that

our lives in faith, in joy and in openness declare our allegiance to Him and show forth praise for who He is and what He has done in us. The question comes from an owl, "Who?"

The third who is one so familiar to all of us, and I refer to it as the who of response. It is from Isaiah 6 when the Lord asked, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, 'Here am I, send me.'" It is not just a once and forever question and answer. It is a daily walk question and answer. Who will say yes to Me, My voice, go where I want him or her to go and do what they are supposed to do today? Who?

The last who that I thought of in Scripture was the who of reception recorded in the last verses in the last chapter of the Bible. It says, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). I can tell you with confidence and from the heart of God that who is you and thank God that who is me. That is anyone wanting to experience life abundant and life eternal. That person can turn to Jesus and according to His wonderful Word, He will never cast out anyone. He will save you. He will give you joy, peace, freedom and a new life. Who? It can be you this very day. Somewhere sitting out there on a limb is a wise old owl and he may not have known that he was speaking a language that would speak to me and prayerfully to you as he just kept repeating what I sense the Lord may be repeating to many of us, "Who, who...who, who? You - whoever you are!

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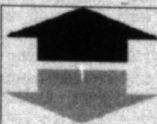
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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

May 23, 2013

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

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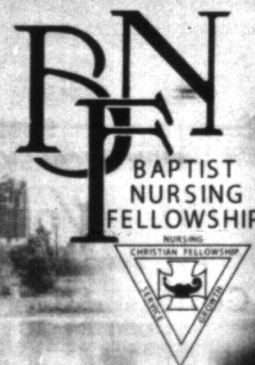
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First Baptist Church

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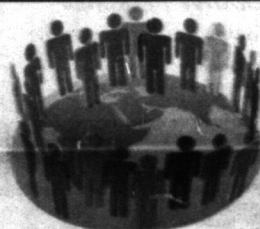


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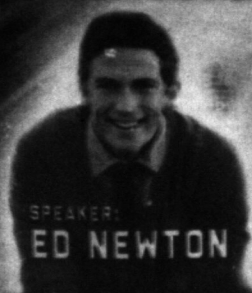
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May 24 - June 6, 2013

"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting"
Psalm 139:23 & 24

Pray for a team of six from **FBC, Madison**, going to Scotland, May 24-31, for evangelism.

Pray for a team of twelve from **FBC, Vandeave**, going to Costa Rica, May 25-June 1, for evangelism and construction.

Pray for **Guy* and Cindy* DeMars**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples in Senegal through hospitality coordination and church/home evangelism.

Pray for a team from **FBC, Jackson**, going to Africa, May 13-28, for evangelism.

Pray for a team of eight from **Good Hope BC**, going to Kenya, May 28-June 6, for bible school.
 Pray for a team of seven from **FBC, Sumrall**, going to Kenya, May 28-June 6, for evangelism.
 Pray for a team of eleven from **Shelton BC, Moselle**, going to Peru, May 28-June 8, for VBS & revival.

Pray for **Thomas* and Kerri Dewett**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in the Dominican Republic through church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for **Alvin* and Mary Doyle**, IMB missionaries to European Peoples in Hungary through member care.

Pray for **Aaron* and Tiffany Epps**, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Brazil through church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for a team of five from **Longview Heights BC**, going to Canada, June 1-9, for construction.

Pray for **Robert* and Margaret Fortenberry**, IMB missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples in Botswana through church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for **David* and Gloria* Glaze**, missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples in the U.S. through media consultation and promotion.

Pray for a team of 10 from **FBC, Starkville**, going to East Asia, May 21-June 3, for university and relational ministry.

Pray for **John* and Sonia* Grady**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in the U.S. through church/home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for **Clarence Frank and Phoebe* Harrison**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Honduras through church planting, church/home outreach and evangelism.

*These International Mission Board missionaries claim Mississippi as their home state. The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.

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Harrisburg BC, Tupelo

May 21

Preacher:

Jim Futral, MBCB

FBC, Vicksburg

May 23

Preacher:

Argile Smith, Pineview, La.

FBC, Picayune

May 30

Preacher:

Clarence Cooper, Brandon BC

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HOUSE TOPS

Politics, reform and revival

Many Christians believe that engaging the political process, electing leaders, and passing legislation will make America better. It is true that these acts can bring about reform, but can politics and reform bring about the true, lasting change that revival can? No.

Although morality can be legislated (murder, theft, etc.) as a deterrent to minimize evil, laws cannot change the

attitude of a person's heart. This should not prompt Christians to walk away from the political square. Christians ought to be engaging their realm of influence with godly wisdom. Why?

People without the mind of Christ do not accept the ways of God. It is stated in 1 Cor. 2:14-16 that, "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor

can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ" (NKJ).

This means Christians have "the mind of Christ" to guide others—both in governance and in decision making. In fact, we are to be actively doing so. Jesus said that Christians are the "salt and light of the world" (Matt 5:13-16). If Christians become lazy and remove themselves from the public and political sphere, then the natural man will make decisions according to the ways of this world (Rom. 12:2). When this happens, we end up having a society like we do today.

Christians ought to be wise as serpents and peaceful as doves as they inject godly wisdom into their sphere of influence, such as meetings of the school board, city council, and county supervisors. It also includes state and federal agencies and legislative bodies. Restoring godly values of a state and nation begin at the local level and prior to that—the home.

Thankfully, the 2013 MS



with Rob Chambers

Legislature passed several good bills including the MS Student Religious Liberty Act. This new law protects a student's religious expression at school. Also, an amendment to the Child Protection Act was passed that will help curtail teen pregnancy. But neither of these bills will effectively prevent a public school teacher, administrator or school board from violating a student's religious liberty nor will it prevent statutory rape. Why?

There is a correlation between a person's heart and the law. Civil law is only as effective as the moral determination of those who are under the law. Those who set their mind toward evil have no regard for the law. MS and America need good laws, but much more than that is re-

quired for a lasting reform.

What we need is a revived church or Christians turning back to God to restore their relationship with Him. Turning back to God also means turning from the world and turning from the idea that church is strictly some sort of social organization where comfort and self-interest is king.

Biblically, the church is a group of people who have been called out of the world and its ways to follow Christ and His ways. This was summed up in John 20:21, "So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' Basically, Jesus has sent all Christians, not just pastors, into the world to share the gospel with the lost (Matt 28:18-20).

Evidently, MS Baptists are faltering in our call to evangelize. MS is perceived as being the buckle of the Bible belt, but this is more of a perception than it is a reality. Apparently, we are more religious than we are biblical. Recent statistics support this claim.

In 2010, there were almost three million people in over one million households in MS. Of these households, nearly two million people had not professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

In 2012, there were 2,140 MS Baptist churches, 683,790 members, and a Sunday School attendance of almost 163,000. That year there were 12,085 baptisms.

Therefore, only 12,085 people of approximately two million unreached people in MS responded to the Gospel and believed and were baptized. This means that in 2012 MS Baptists reached about 0.5 percent of the lost population in MS.

If MS Baptists expect our state and its citizens to reflect biblical values in word, deed, and law, then our quest must first begin with seeking God and revival, relating to and leading others to Christ, and making disciples. Otherwise, we are rearranging chairs on the Titanic.

Chambers serves as consultant for the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. He can be contacted at 601-292-3331 or rchambers@christianaction.com.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MCLAIN, MS IS CURRENTLY SEEKING A PASTOR. Resumes may be sent to FBC of McLain, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. 69, McLain, MS 39456. For further information concerning: pastorum, size of church, salary package, etc., contact Mr. Ross Liles at 601-749-1985

FBC OF MARION (NEAR MERIDIAN) IS SEEKING A PART-TIME SECRETARY/MINISTRY ASSISTANT. If interested, contact Pastor Drew Dabbs (drew_dabbs@yahoo.com).

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Revivals & Homecomings

► **Calvary Church, Carroll County:** Homecoming, May 26; singing, 10:30 a.m., followed by worship and dinner; Mark Nail, speaker; Bud Vance, pastor.

► **Antioch Church, Lawrence Association:** 153rd homecoming, May 26; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Lance Moak and daughters, speakers; Ray Scott, music.

► **Friendship Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, May 26; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch and afternoon singing; Jonathon Sherwin, speaker.

► **Concord Church, Franklin Association:** Homecoming, May 26; services, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the ground and afternoon service.

► **Salem Church, Lauderdale County:** 175th anniversary and

homecoming, May 26; services, 10 a.m., followed by a gospel concert, lunch, and fellowship; Second Mile, music.

► **Mont Rose Church, Quitman:** Homecoming, May 26; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Robert Haney, speaker; Doug Jones, pastor.

► **Arlington Church, Bogue Chitto:** Homecoming, May 26; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch; Josh Scott, speaker; Tasha Scott, music; Huey Moak, interim pastor.

► **Roundaway Church, Doddsville:** Homecoming, May 26; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch; Larry Braswell, speaker; Bob Hill, pastor.

► **Rock Hill Church, Brandon:** Homecoming, May 26; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by pot luck lunch; Mark Dearman, pastor.

Staff Changes



GASTON CHURCH, BOONEVILLE, has called Marty Hurt to serve as associate pastor of music and education. Shown are Hurt, his wife Christy, and their children.

In other Staff News:

► **Mark McDonald**, former pastor of Grace United Church, Decatur, is available for pulpit supply. He can be reached at (601) 513-2352.

IRS

cont. from p. 1

Mark DeMoss, a spokesman for Graham, told Fox News it was the first time the ministry had been audited in its history.

"These certainly appear to be politically motivated since the ministry had run some newspaper ads — not mentioning any candidates — simply urging people to vote for candidates with biblical values," DeMoss said.

The Biblical Recorder, the official newsjournal for North Carolina Southern Baptists, found itself in the same situation in March. The newspaper garnered national attention last summer after editor Allan Blume published an interview with Chick-fil-A's president, Dan Cathy.

In reference to his support of the traditional family, Cathy said he was "guilty as charged." The company faced a firestorm of criticism in the national news media and the threat of a boycott. However, Chick-fil-A supporters mounted a campaign that reportedly resulted in the largest one-day purchases of their products in the history of the company.

The Biblical Recorder also published the BGEA ads supporting North Carolina's marriage amendment — and then came the telephone call from the IRS.

"It raised some red flags and made me wonder why we were being targeted for an audit when we have been around since 1833 and have never been audited before," Blume told Fox News. "Putting it all together made me wonder."

Blume said the timing may have been coincidental — but "it didn't seem that way."

"There seems to be a very anti-Christian bias that has flowed into a lot of government agencies — oppression literally against Christian organizations and groups," Blume said. "It makes you wonder what's going on."

Blume said the newspaper was eventually cleared, but the audit consumed time and money. "It was a lot of time and energy that we didn't have," Blume said. "It took some of our staff literally several weeks of doing nothing but that [audit]," he said.

The IRS eventually cleared both BGEA and Samaritan's Purse, but Franklin Graham

noted that the audit cost the ministries money.

"Unfortunately, while these audits not only wasted taxpayer money, they wasted money contributed by donors for ministry purposes, as we had to spend precious resources servicing the IRS agents in our offices," Graham wrote in his letter to Obama.

According to Lifefews.com, James Dobson, the founder of Focus on the Family, said he faced discrimination from the IRS when trying to start Family Talk Radio Corporation. Dobson claimed an IRS agent told the group's general counsel that the application for non-profit status would be turned down because Dobson had criticized U.S. President Barack Obama in previous radio broadcasts.

Editor's Note: Starnes, a former assistant editor at Baptist Press in Nashville, is host of Fox News & Commentary, heard daily on Fox News Radio stations. This article first appeared at www.toddstarnes.com. Used by permission. Edited and updated by staff members of The Baptist Record.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

SCRIPTURE SCRAMBLE

LUINT OWN UOY EHVA TNO DASEK

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YOJ IWLL EB PLOTCEEM .

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Have fun with scrambled words and exercise your Bible knowledge. Unscramble each word to discover the verse or verses from the King James Version. For an extra challenge, unscramble the passage first before unscrambling the scripture reference.



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Look for Good Works • Titus 3:1-15

As we conclude this quarter, Paul's continues in Titus chapter three from last week's lesson, admonishing believers to live like they know the Lord. In verses one and two he taught, "Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men," (All Scriptures New King James). The Greek word here rendered speak evil of no one, is blasphemous, from which we derive the term blasphemy. The word translated humility also means courtesy, so the Lord expects His people to treat other people who do not yet know Him with kindness and to represent Him at all times to a lost world.

Paul reminded Titus that we must represent the Lord to the lost, for we all were once lost as well. Verse three reads, "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." We were all foolish as well. Jesus used this same word to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus when they did not believe the Old Testament prophecies about Himself.

All of us were led astray, according to this verse. This word also means to be deceived, or to wander, and in this case

it means that we were caused to wonder. Since Revelation 12:9 describes Satan as the deceiver of the nations, we understand that he has deceived us all. We were led to serve our passions and hedonistic pleasures, according to this verse. As someone once said, "The only difference between the best of us in the church and the worst of those out of the church is the blood of the

Lord Jesus Christ." We once were just like all lost people, for we all once were lost and headed for hell.

Those who know and serve the Lord were once lost, but then the "kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared," Titus 3:4. This word kindness also means generosity. Jesus paid for our sins. Twice in 1 Corinthians it reads that we were bought with a price (6:20, 7:23). The verb translated appeared may also mean shine. This verb is past tense and passive voice. That means that God's kindness has already ap-



Explore the Bible

with Rick Henson

peared and that it was caused to appear. This refers to when God demonstrated His love for us, which according to Romans 5:8 was when "God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."

This does not refer to when His kindness appeared in our lives individually, but when it appeared for all mankind. That was on the cross, where Jesus willingly shed His precious blood for us lost sinners. This appearance was the beginning of God's new covenant with man.

Titus 3:5 reminds us that we did not earn our salvation. We were not saved according to "works of righteousness which we have done," but through God's great mercy and His cleansing us. Imagine if only people who were twelve feet tall or taller could enter heaven. One might say he is six feet, six inches tall and brag that he is taller than most. He still would be

way too short for heaven. The same way one may feel morally superior to another, we all fail God's moral standard miserably.

God graciously paid for our sins, for we could not. The word translated mercy is also translated pity, clemency, and compassion. God works through His Holy Spirit to regenerate our souls, according to verse five. This passage reveals that God gave His Holy Spirit, and the verb denotes action completed in the past. Again, this not referring to when the Lord placed His Spirit in our hearts individually when we were saved, but when He gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church at Pentecost.

The final verse completes the salvation event: We were justified, or acquitted by what Jesus did on Calvary. Once again, the action of this verb described a process that is totally accomplished- the cruel death of Jesus on the cross and His victorious resurrection. God did this all and we are the beneficiary. God saved us when we could not save ourselves, allows us to serve Him here on earth, and makes us joint heirs with Jesus for eternity (Romans 8:17). What a great and generous God we serve!

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

Giving Others What They Really Need • Proverbs 11:12-14; 17:17; 18:24; 27:5-6, 9-10, 17; 28:23; 29:10

Some mothers-in-law have gained a reputation of being meddlers in family affairs. However, fathers-in-law have been known to do so, as well. The Bible shares one such instance that was definitely motivated out of a heart of concern; Exodus 18:5-26 recounts the story of Jethro giving unsolicited advice to his son-in-law, Moses. You are encouraged to read this interesting account, which will be applied later in our study.

This last lesson from the month-long focus on Proverbs discusses friendship: character traits we would do well to seek in friends and emulate ourselves. The value of honesty, loyalty and support are brought to light in these verses from six different chapters of this favorite Old Testament book.

Honesty is a vital component of good relationships. When we're not up-front with friends because we "don't want to hurt their feelings", this doesn't serve their best interests. Even though it is uncomfortable and challenging, if we look to God, He can help us address needed issues appropriately. Proverbs 29:10 says that the upright person seeks his friend's well-being, and 27:5-6 and 28:23 declare the benefits of "open rebuke" and the "wounds of a friend" to be "faithful" and will produce "more favor afterward" (NKJV). As we invest in the lives of others through honest

confrontation, we can help promote their Christian growth, but we're cautioned to do it "with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted" (Galatians 6:1 HCSB).

Loyalty is the second trait we're called to examine. "Friends come and friends go, but a true friend sticks by you like family", we're told (Proverbs 18:24 MSG). We are to show loyalty to friends and family, exhibiting love and faithfulness in these relationships at all times, even when to do so proves challenging: "A friend loves at all times", Proverbs 17:17 (NKJV) reminds us.

In his book, "A Proverb a Day Keeps the Troubles Away", author John Drakeford details the early days of the relationship between Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan. Helen's parents were so permissive that their child was often quite unruly.

"Anne began to discipline the little girl and demand that she accept responsibility," says Drakeford. The loyal, determined teacher arranged separate living

quarters for her and her student, "where she sometimes had to literally fight with Helen." This intense training, although difficult for both, started Keller on the path "in which she made a magnificent contribution to humanity."

Supporting others is our third trait. A supportive friend will be one that, when a confidence is shared, it will go no further (see Proverbs 11:13). Gossiping is one of the quickest friendship-killers known to man.

Profitable counsel can be found on the lips of a wise friend, and the prudent will seek out such mentors (Proverbs

11:14). "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend," says Proverbs 27:17, and encouraging counsel "gives delight" (vs. 9 NKJV). The man or woman who has such a comrade is blessed indeed. A good New Testament example of a supporter is detailed in Acts 9. After his conversion, Saul tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him, not believing he was actually a Christ-fol-

lower. However, Barnabas "took him and brought him to the apostles" (vs. 27 NIV), convincing them of the genuineness of Saul's faith.

Let's look back at the dialogue between Moses and Jethro in Exodus 18: first, the father-in-law greeted Moses, rejoicing with him for all God had done. The next day, as Jethro observed Moses' activities, he realized there needed to be some changes. With a caring and tactful manner, he confronted his son-in-law, giving him some godly counsel (I can picture Jethro's hand on Moses' shoulder). The on-target observation and suggestions were well-received, and Moses (as well as the people of Israel) benefited. We can follow Jethro's example of "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15 NKJV) as we allow a blend of honesty, loyalty and support to govern our words and actions.

You may have heard these thoughts based on the acronym, T.H.I.N.K.: "Before you speak or act, ask yourself, 'Is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind?'" This checklist can help our interactions with others be "good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear" (Ephesians 4:29 HCSB).

I think I'll put this list on my refrigerator!

Maniscalco is a member of LeMoyné Boulevard Church, Biloxi.

Bible Studies for Life

with Ann Maniscalco



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MUSICIANS

cont. from p. 1

Musicians Honor Choir event proved to be a successful and memorable weekend of encouragement, ministry, and creative worship leadership opportunities for children representing

all areas of our state.

"Our children were challenged to prioritize their love for God, and secondly, to develop their leadership skills, both of which directly correlated with the Church Music Department's core values. Due to the many positive comments I received after the Saturday worship concert, I anticipate that the enrollment for the 2014 Honor Choir will be much larger.

"Also, I am very thankful for the great folks at First Baptist Florence for hosting the 2013 Honor Choir."

The 2013 Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians Honor Choir was sponsored by gifts to the

Mississippi Baptist Cooperative Program. "I am beyond thankful for our faithful churches that give to the Cooperative Program and make these events possible for our young people," South said.

For more information on auditioning for the 2014 Mississippi Baptist Young Musicians

Honor Choir, contact South at MBCB Church Music Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3272 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 272. E-mail: wsouth@mbcb.org. Web site: http://mbcb.org/church_growth/cm/honor_choir.aspx.

Just for the Record



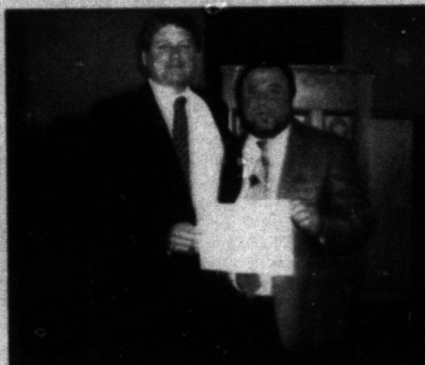
FIRST CHURCH, PEARL, recognized several women on Mother's Day. Each of them is over 90 years old. Shown are Maud Blount, Frances Grant, Jean Turbville, Laverne Halford, Johnnie Bradshaw, and Beatrice Henderson.



FIRST CHURCH, HOLLY SPRINGS, held its bi-annual baby dedication service May 13.



LIBERTY CHURCH, PONTOTOC COUNTY, held a baby dedication May 12. Shown are Marty and Tanya Abbot with children Corbin and Jaden, and pastor Harvey Sewell.



NEW LIBERTY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, ordained Chet Barnes as deacon Aug. 12, 2012. Shown are Barnes and pastor Paul Smith.

In other Church News:

► **Clear Springs Church, Louin**, will hold a songfest May 26, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch. John 3:16, featured group.



EAST MOSS POINT CHURCH, MOSS POINT, ordained Ryan Ogborn to the gospel ministry Apr. 14. Shown are Roberta Vizcaino Ogborn, Ogborn, and AMD Philip G. Price.



NEW PROSPECT CHURCH, OXFORD, held a baby dedication for Colton Allen May 12. Shown are Riley, Trent, Colton, Miranda, and Scott Allen. Ken White, pastor.



BEULAH CHURCH, DECATUR, held a baby dedication. Shown are Josh Chaney holding daughter Olivia; Monica Chaney holding daughter, Stella; and Zach and Brooke Steele holding son Austin.



GUM SPRINGS CHURCH, BRAXTON, licensed Bruce Smith to the gospel ministry Mar. 3. Shown are pastor Andy Gipson and Smith.



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, recently dedicated five babies. Shown are the families with pastor Hal Hatten.



The WMU ladies of **PROVIDENCE CHURCH, CARROLTON**, have been making tie blankets to distribute to St. Jude and with their food basket ministry. Debbie Alderson, WMU director; David Haggerty, pastor.